Writing Tip Sheet: Quoting

I) Quoting – a Definition

To quote means to take a passage from an outside text and present it **word for word**, **enclosed in quotation marks, and followed by a citation**, in your paper. When you quote, you must be perfectly true to the original text; if you make any changes you are no longer quoting. If you wish to change the words, you should paraphrase—please read the tip sheet on paraphrasing carefully.

II) When to Quote

Many writing texts recommend allowing for no more than 15% of an essay to be quoted material. While this is not a "hard" limit, the problem is that most people sometimes makes quotes 40–50% (or more) of their essay. They take mundane, even boring passages, filling papers with huge quotes that add nothing, and smother their natural voice. So try to limit quoting to when the passage:

- Is especially distinguished, and your attempt to paraphrase it would not do it justice.
- States somebody's (preferably an expert's) opinion.
- Is highly technical and you simply cannot paraphrase it without changing its meaning.

On the flip side, try paraphrasing (see tip sheet *Paraphrasing*) when presenting:

- General or background information/description of locations
- Miscellaneous facts or statistics
- Case studies or stories/narratives

Of course, for any of the above, if there is a specific passage that is so perfectly worded, you would ruin it by changing it, you should quote. But, try to get into the habit of paraphrasing undistinguished material.

III) Formatting Quotes

Signal Phrases

For full sentence quotes, use *signal phrases,* groups of words that introduce quotes. They *signal* to the reader that outside information is coming. They can be thought of as transitions between your ideas and words and someone else's. If you are including a full-sentence quote in your text you should **always** use a signal phrase. Simply dropping in a quote, even if it is grammatically correct, is not considered correct research format.

Consider the following example:

> Architecture must be functional for the end user and yet aesthetically pleasing; *as Christopher Day, a Prince of Wales award–winner and internationally renowned architectural consultant, notes*, "Architecture is just that—the bringing into relationship of the background context and the life of future users. If either of these gets left out, it ceases to be relevant, opening itself to resentments."[1]

Note how the *italicized* signal phrase smoothly introduces the quote.

And note, too, the information provided in the signal phrase. Always try and provide sufficient context so that the reader can understand the significance of the quote that follows. Consider the next two examples:

> <u>Wrong:</u> Christopher Day notes, "Architecture is just that—the bringing into relationship of the background context and the life of future users. If either of these gets left out, it ceases to be relevant, opening itself to resentments."[1]

In this case we have **no** idea who Christopher Day is. Why should we care what he says? Make clear the cited person's credibility. If you don't have biographical information about the speaker, at least type out the title of the source document.

> <u>Right:</u> Christopher Day in his book <u>Places of the Soul</u>, notes: "Architecture is just that—the bringing into relationship of the background context and the life of future users. If either of these gets left out, it ceases to be relevant, opening itself to resentments."[1]

<u>Partial Sentence Quoting</u>

If you use only a part of a sentence as a quote, drop it into your own sentence, punctuating as necessary. Use a signal phrase if it helps clarify or add credibility to the information. Consider the following:

> Carpet companies have adopted new strategies to position their wares as green. Back in the early 1990s, their products "got a bad reputation" because there was so much waste involved.[1]

> Carpet companies have adopted new strategies to position their wares as green. Designer Nadav Malin in the <u>Architectural Record</u> notes that back in the early 1990s their products "got a bad reputation" because there was so much waste involved.[1]

While the overall idea may be taken from the source, only the words "got a bad reputation" are taken directly (perhaps because this could not be paraphrased without reducing its effectiveness).

Look carefully and you will notice that many researched texts flow in and out of quoted material. But in all cases, *it is always clear when the author's ideas end and another person's begins.*

<u>Quotes of 5 lines or less</u>

> Quotes of different lengths require different formats. If your quote is 5 lines of text (in *your* paper) or less, place the text in quotation marks and place it normally within the paragraph and be sure to insert a citation at the end of the quote outside the quotation marks.

> If it is a full sentence quote, be sure to use a signal phrase and introduce the quote with a comma or colon (depending on sentence structure).

<u>Quotes of 6 lines of longer</u>

If your quote is 6 lines of text (in your essay) or longer, you should use a **block format** and separate it out.

- Use a signal phrase followed by a colon to introduce the quote
- Insert a 3 space a break
- Indent **entire** quote 10 spaces. Do not use quotation marks for indented quotes. The indentation communicates that this is a quote.
- Single space within the quote
- Place your footnote at the end of the quote
- Triple space back to the regular text

You do not need to change the font style or size in the quote.

The following example is taken from the book: <u>Ethics and the Practice of Architecture</u> by Barry Wasserman, Patrick Sullivan, and Gregory Palermo. Note how they carefully introduced the quote with a signal phrase, being sure to provide all necessary context.

> This assertion of the beneficial goodness of architecture has a long history in Western architectural thought, stemming at least back to Vitruvius. Vitruvius in his Preface to Book I of the *Ten Books On Architecture*, addresses Augustus:
>
>> But when I saw that you were giving your attention not only to the welfare of society in general and to the establishment of public order, but also to the providing of public buildings intended for utilitarian purposes, so that no only should the State have been enriched with provinces by your means, but that the greatness of its power might likewise be attended with distinguished authority in its public buildings, I thought that I ought to take the first opportunity to lay before you my writing on this theme.[1]
>
> Virtuvius undergirds Caesar's concern for the welfare of society and public order with architecture….

<u>Ellipses (…)</u>

Sometimes you will have a passage you wish to quote, but some sections of the passage may not be important. If this is the case, **don't include them!** (Don't include unnecessary materials in your paper.)

Deleted the material and replace it with ellipses (…). This indicates the reader that you have removed information.

<u>Original Quote:</u> "Given the fact that what we produce today is bound to be specifically modern, no matter how we incorporate the past into our work, we should look at that other tradition—the tradition of modernism—to see which of its elements inevitably persist in our attitude towards art and architecture."

<u>Used in Paper:</u> In Alan Colquhoun's essay, "Three Kinds of Historicism" he notes: "Given the fact that what we produce today is bound to be specifically modern…we should look at

that other tradition—the tradition of modernism—to see which of its elements inevitably persist in our attitude towards art and architecture."[1]

If you use an ellipses, you **cannot** change the meaning of the quote in any way.

If you excise words from within a single sentence, use an ellipses with three dots. If you take out more than a sentence, add a fourth dot.

Brackets [ ]

Sometimes to make a quote grammatical within your text, you need to make minor changes to the passage. These changes may be:

- Capitalizing letters that were previously in lower case.
- Changing verb tense so that the passage agrees with the overall text.
- Identifying unclear pronouns.
- Smoothing out the flow of text so it works in your essay.

Make the change and place them in brackets to show that this is not part of the original quote.

Original Quote: "This led him to contract two indentured craftsmen from England who created the exterior and interior decorative elements. William Buckland came to work for Mason in 1755 and completed his term of service in 1759. It was Buckland's knowledge of the latest English tastes that allowed for such up-to-the-minute details as the Gothic arches on the riverfront porch."

Used in Paper: Architectural Digest cites William Buckland as the man responsible for many of the fine details in the house, noting: "[He] came to work for Mason in 1755 and completed his term of service in 1759. It was Buckland's knowledge of the latest English tastes that allowed for such up-to-the-minute details as the Gothic arches on the riverfront porch."[1]

Note how the first Buckland in the quote was replaced with a "He". Why? Because Buckland had just been introduced and, without a pronoun here, his name would have been repeated three times in three lines.

Again, you cannot change the meaning in any way. The brackets indicate to the reader that something has been changed but *only to ensure that the quote grammatically fits the text*. You cannot put words into another author's mouth.

Citation

You must **always** cite quotes. Simply including a signal phrase with the speaker's name and the source is never enough. Footnote the quote correctly.

For additional help, please see Writing Tip Sheets *Paraphrasing* and *Citation Guide*